

Preparing and Serving Turnips: Checklist & Tips



Peak Season in Washington State: September-May

Variety

- ☐ White: pure white, round; fresh, slightly pungent, sweet, and pleasant taste; Tokyo Cross variety have a mild flavor and a crunchy, juicy texture, much like a radish.
- ☐ Purple top: purple fading to white at the root; round; when small, sweeter and delicate flavor.

Ordering Specifications

Style

- Bunched turnips: turnips tied in bunches, tops full length or no less than 6 inches
- Turnips with short-trimmed tops: turnips showing leafstems not more than 4 inches in length
- Topped turnips: tops removed to not more than ¾ inches in length

Grade

- U.S. No. 1 – Well trimmed, firm, fairly smooth, fairly well shaped, fairly clean, and free from soft rot and damage from cuts, discoloration, freezing, growth cracks, pithiness, and woodiness. Bunched tops or turnips with short-trimmed tops shall have tops that are fresh and free from decay and damage by discoloration, freezing, disease, etc. Diameter of turnip should not be less than 1 ¾ inches
- U.S. No. 2 – Same as above except turnip roots are well trimmed, firm, *not excessively rough, not seriously misshapen* instead of fairly smooth and clean.

Receiving & Shipment Inspection

- ☐ Optimal, peak season turnips are smooth, unblemished, fresh greens, firm and heavy for size
- ☐ Turnips 2" or less are usually more tender

- ☐ Standard bunching: turnips should be fairly uniform in size, not weigh less than a pound and contain at least 3 turnips
- ☐ Not more than 10% of bunches in a lot may fail to meet requirements standard bunching
- ☐ Serious damage is constituted by affecting appearance, edible portion and causes a loss of more than 20% by weight in the ordinary preparation for use

Storage Guidelines

- ☐ CCP: Cold moist storage (32-40°F, 90-95% relative humidity)
 - Similar to other root crops
- ☐ For storage, place unwashed turnips in a plastic bag and refrigerate
- ☐ Expected shelf life is up to 2-4 months, can be waxed

Preparing Raw, Fresh Turnips

Materials Needed (Washed, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried)

- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Knives
- ☐ Vegetable scrubbing brush
- ☐ Slicer (mainly for medium to large turnips)
- ☐ Potato peeler
- ☐ Hand peeler

Preparation (Time, bring timer)

- ☐ Wash and scrub thoroughly with brush (Note: Young turnips can just be scrubbed, no need to peel; older turnips are best peeled)
- ☐ Trim off the tops (greens) to ½ inch.
 - Greens can be cooked and eaten
- ☐ (optional) Place in potato peeler to peel skins
 - Baby turnips do not need to be peeled
- ☐ (optional) Peel remaining skin with hand peeler
- ☐ Use tomato slicer to cut turnips into even slices if large or cut into halves or quarters if small
 - Even pieces will allow turnips to cook uniformly



Central Kitchen Protocol

Made possible by funding from the Department of Health and Human Services and Public Health – Seattle & King County.

Turnip Recipes with Packaging & Serving Recommendations



- ½-1" thick cubes or slices are recommended
- ☐ CCP: Hold at 41°F or below until serving
- ☐ *Tip:* Blanche large/old turnips in boiling water 4-5 minutes to remove bitter/strong flavor

Serving Suggestions:

- Fresh: cut into sticks, sliced/julienned turnips with dip or hummus

Preparing Cooked Turnips

(Turnips retain their freshness if cooked gently until just tender; overcooking turns them tasteless and flabby.)

Materials Needed (Washed, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried)

- ☐ Cookie sheets or shallow roasting pans
- ☐ Parchment paper to line pans
- ☐ Container with water
- ☐ Oven rack(s), as many as needed
- ☐ Materials needed to wash and cut turnips (brush, knife, etc.)

Preparation

- ☐ Wash and slice turnips (see above)
- ☐ Place cut turnip in a shallow pan or cookie sheet, keeping a 2" clearance on all sides
- ☐ Lightly sprinkle turnips with water to avoid over drying
- ☐ Cover pans securely with aluminum foil
- ☐ Cook in convection oven at approximately 370-375°F for about 30-35 minutes
 - Depending on the sizes, cooking time will vary
- ☐ (Optional) Remove foil and cook for additional 10 minutes for a slight caramelization
- ☐ Remove from oven when fork tender and cool
 - Check by placing a knife/fork in the biggest piece – ready if it slides out easily
- ☐ CCP: Cool within 4 hrs to below 40°F, label with date and name.
- ☐ CCP: Reheat and hold at 165°F for 15 seconds before serving
- ☐ HACCP Process #3: Complex Process

Serving Suggestions:

- Bake with carrots and parsnips
- Boil and puree with potato for low-starch alternative to mashed potatoes
- Steam, roast, sauté, or stir-fry

Benefits of Eating Turnips

- Turnips are a good source of vitamin C (especially raw), potassium and calcium
- Believed to be one of the cruciferous vegetables believed to prevent cancer
- Reliable storage crop that is available during winter months
- Root vegetable that has a sharp and sweet flavor

Recipe

Turnip Tots (Adapted for school kitchens)



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Turnip Recipes with Packaging & Serving Recommendations



Ingredient *Washington grown	50 servings
Baby turnips*	100
Olive oil	1 ½ cups
Mint leaves, minced*	1.9 lbs
Lemon zest, grated	12 ½ tsp
Salt	1 tsp
Panko Bread Crumbs	1.9 lbs
Pepper	½ tsp

Instruction:

Steps	Critical Control Point
Wash baby turnips (no need to peel) well and cut into quarters or halves.	
Combine spices and oil and toss turnips until mixed well.	
Place pan liner on a sheet pan. Divide and spread out mixture evenly. Cover with foil.	
Bake in convection oven for 350°F for 20 minutes, and then gently mix.	
Bake an additional 10 minutes, uncovered to brown bread crumbs. Check to make sure turnips are fork tender.	Internal Temperature: 140°F for 15 seconds
Remove and let cool or keep warm until serving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold at 140°F until service. Do not hold for more than 2 hours. • Dispose or cool down leftovers according to HACCP plan requirements • School site kitchen staff must check temperature upon arrival

Packing and Serving Recommendations

- Ideal recipe for schools with ovens in the kitchen

Resources

Rothenberger R. *Vegetable and Harvest Storage*. Department of Horticulture. University of Missouri Extension. Reviewed June 2010. Accessed: January 2012. Available at: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/g6226>

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC). *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce*. 3rd Edition. Jones Books. Published September 2004.

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Tong Cindy. *Harvesting and Storing Home Garden Vegetables*. Regents of the University of Minnesota. University of Minnesota Extension. Reviewed 2009. Accessed: Jan 2012. Available at: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg1424.html>

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